

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

LETTER TO PRESIDENT BIDEN
FROM THE AMERICAN HELLENIC
INSTITUTE ON THE STATE OF
U.S.-GREECE RELATIONS

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, as the founder and Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, I include in the RECORD a letter from the American Hellenic Institute to President Biden regarding the Institute's present perspective on the state of the U.S.-Greece relations. The letter includes discussion of issues on defense, security, and counterterrorism; international commerce and trade and energy security; and the Cyprus issue.

APRIL 22, 2021.

President JOSEPH R. BIDEN,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BIDEN: On behalf of the nationwide membership of the American Hellenic Institute (AHI), thank you for your remarks to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Greek Independence. Although many aspects of your remarks resonated with the Greek American community, the following excerpt struck a chord:

"What really binds us together are our values. We are two people rooted in a common conviction that every human being is entitled to be treated with dignity. And it is our shared commitment to liberty, human rights, and the rule of law, that empowers us to write our own futures, whether 200 years ago or today."

Mr. President, the momentous occasion to mark Greece's Bicentennial provides the opportunity to convey the Institute's present perspective on the state of U.S.-Greece relations, which is flourishing under the "shared commitment to liberty, human rights, and the rule of law" that you correctly and eloquently stated. Unfortunately, malign actors in the region, especially Turkey, display a blatant and an intense disregard for these shared values with provocative actions that threaten the United States' allies and strategic partners as well as our interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is in the United States' best interest for Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean to be politically, economically and socially stable, and for democratic principles to flourish, including adherence to the rule of law. Greece is an immensely valuable link as "a pillar of stability" in the region as several high-level U.S. government officials have noted.

The U.S.-Greece relationship has reached new heights by virtue of an ongoing Strategic Dialogue, which include avenues for cooperation across sectors, such as: regional cooperation, defense and security, and trade and investment, among others, are plotted for implementation.

DEFENSE, SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Greece advances U.S. interests as a pivotal and dependable NATO and a frontline state against terrorism. The Mutual Defense Co-

operation Agreement between the United States and Greece illustrates the two allies' commitment to address longterm security challenges in the region. The Agreement currently is under revision. After it is upgraded, it will offer more flexibility to deepen cooperation in the defense sector, according to Greece's Minister of Defense Nikos Panagiotopoulos, with whom I held a public discussion last month. For its part, Greece further demonstrates its commitment to the Alliance as one of a minority of NATO members to meet NATO's minimum standard on defense expenditures; second only to the U.S., by percentage. To demonstrate further:

Souda Bay, Crete: in our view, the most important U.S. military facility in the Mediterranean Sea from where in the past joint USN/USAF reconnaissance missions and air refueling support for U.S. and NATO operations were implemented successfully and continues to be immensely important.

NATO Joint-Command HQ: Thessaloniki hosts a NATO Rapid Deployment Corps combined with its Third Army Corps for two years.

Operation Atlantic Resolve: Greece enables a substantial portion of the U.S. Army's 10th Combat Aviation Brigade to enter the European theater through the port of Thessaloniki and to depart through Alexandroupolis. Alexandroupolis is being recognized as a city with increased geostrategic importance, which can also contribute to economic development and energy security.

USAF temporarily operated MQ-9 Reaper Drones from Greece's Larisa Air Force Base.

The 101st Combat Aviation Brigade of the U.S. Army, from October–Nov 20, 2020 and from February–Mar 21, 2021, stationed and trained at Volos and Stefanovikeio.

It is evident Greece contributes significantly to U.S. interests. However, it becomes increasingly challenging for Greece to fulfill this important role when it constantly is expending valuable resources to defend itself against aggressive and provocative behavior emanating from a fellow NATO member, Turkey.

Turkey engaged in over 7,000 violations of Greece's territorial waters and airspace in 2020. There were 4,605 airspace and 3,215 maritime incidents.

Turkey's routine challenges to Greece's sovereignty must cease and desist. In fact, Greece's Chief of the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, General Konstantinos Floros, called out Turkey's provocative behavior, stating to an AHI audience on April 1, 2021 that Turkey threatens "Greece's sovereign rights." In this context, Gen. Floros explicitly cited as example the maritime border Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Turkey and Libya. In addition, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Geoffrey Pyatt has called the MoU "unhelpful" and "escalatory" in nature in previous public statements. Ambassador Pyatt also affirmed the internationally recognized legal concept that "inhabited islands as a matter of customary international law are entitled to the same treatment as continental territory."

INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE AND TRADE AND ENERGY SECURITY

Greece also is an important player in international commerce and trade, especially via its shipping industry. According to Greek shipping industry statistics, 22.5% and

20.3% of the Greek-owned fleet's activity is dedicated to the U.S. and the European trade, respectively; and "Greek-owned ships represent almost 21% of the global tonnage."

AHI requests the Administration maintain high-level engagement with Greece on economic relations and encourages future U.S.-Greece economic relationships to pursue commercial partnerships and opportunities for more U.S. investment in Greece.

However, it is important to note that Turkey also threatens Greece's economic development. Turkey exploits its control over the flow of migrants to Europe, in essence, weaponizing them. Historically, Greece has carried the heavy burden of migrant flows to Europe, which has had a detrimental impact upon Greece's economy. Prime Minister Mitsotakis has been very clear to state that Turkey bears its responsibility due to Turkey's ability to control "the flows in the Aegean."

Moreover, Turkey's threat to energy security in the region is not in the best interests of the United States and stymies Greece's potential as an energy hub. Turkey has encroached upon Greece's continental shelf off the coast of the Greek island complex of Kastellorizo in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. This island complex is sovereign Greek territory. It has a continental shelf as defined under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea which is part of the Greek continental shelf. The island complex is also part of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which is available to Greece. Ambassador Pyatt underscored upholding international law when he stated the U.S. position that islands have "exactly the same" continental shelf and exclusive economic zone rights as does any mainland territory. "I have also made a point on many occasions . . . that the United States adheres to the principal of international maritime law that islands, including Kastellorizo, have exactly the same continental shelf and EEZ rights as does any mainland territory," Ambassador Pyatt stated to reporters on July 23, 2020.

Turkey also has exercised "gunboat diplomacy" in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkish drillships have been in Cypriot waters, conducting activities illegally in violation of Cyprus' sovereignty and international law. AHI welcomes the United States' stated support for the Republic of Cyprus's right to develop its natural resources, including in its exclusive economic zone.

THE CYPRUS ISSUE

A key to peace and stability in the region is for good neighborly relations among NATO members and respect for the rule of law. However, Turkey's continuing occupation of Cyprus, which is a member of the European Union; its intransigence in solving the Cyprus problem, and its refusal to recognize the Republic of Cyprus, are detrimental to U.S. interests. To illustrate Turkey's intransigence, Turkey insists on maintaining troop levels in Cyprus and on remaining a guarantor power as part of a solution to the Cyprus issue, which led to the collapse of settlement talks in 2017.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken's response on the Cyprus issue during a March 10th, 2021 House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing is welcomed: "We strongly support a comprehensive settlement that reunifies Cyprus in a Bicomunal Federation. We

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

engage in the effort to advance that prospect, including the supportive role of the United Nations, and as well, direct American engagement in that effort. So I think you'll see American diplomacy fully engage."

However, Mr. President, as a public servant who advocated for upholding the rule of law on Cyprus throughout your long career, I am reminded of your January 27, 1989 letter to then AHI Chairman Dean Lomis, where you stated: "... we must urge the new Administration [President George H.W. Bush] to make Cyprus a higher policy priority in American foreign policy ... we cannot lose sight of the fact that the rights of Greek Cypriots have been trampled upon, and we must ensure that their claims to ancestral land and property seized during the 1974 invasion are not compromised. Finally, we must send a signal to Turkey that until it has removed every last soldier from Cyprus, it will never be recognized as a full member of the international community."

It is this same clear message to Turkey regarding Cyprus that the United States must send today because the conditions are the same, if not worse, as recent public discourse emanating from the Turkish government has called for a two-state solution.

Mr. President, the United States-Greece relationship is a strong and healthy one thanks in large part to the shared values identified in your Greek Independence Day celebratory remarks. Greece has proven to be a "pillar of stability," a frontline state to combat terrorism, and a reliable NATO ally. AHI anticipates that bilateral relations, which are at a high point, will be taken to even greater heights during your Administration. By contrast, Turkey is the perpetrator of instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and broader region which is detrimental to U.S. security interests. Turkey is a failed NATO ally that cozies up to Russia and Iran and is a threat to U.S. allies and strategic partners. The U.S. must demonstrate strong, unequivocal support of Greece by continuing to strengthen relations across all sectors and by applying the rule of law to Turkey for its illegal actions.

Respectfully submitted,

Sincerely,

NICK LARIGAKIS,
President.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BISHOP NATHANIEL JAMES DAVIS, SR., TH.D.

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the life of Bishop Nathaniel James Davis, Sr., Th.D. He was profoundly devoted to his faith and his family, and dedicated his life to serving his community.

Bishop Davis moved to Seattle in 1955, and quickly became a pillar in the Christian community. He joined the Bethel Christian Church of the Apostolic Faith shortly after moving, finding a home among other service- and family-minded members of the organization. He was deeply involved with the Bethel Christian Church, and has undoubtedly touched the lives of countless members of the Seattle community. After many years of selflessness and dedication, Bishop Davis became a Pastor at the Bethel Christian Church, a position he held for 37 years. His legacy and influence

are felt by countless members of the Church, where he was a fixture for more than 65 years.

Bishop Davis' leadership and commitment to his faith extended beyond his work in Seattle. He was the founding Bishop of the Alaska District Council, serving as Diocesan of the 56th Episcopal District and presiding over the Council for 9 years. He was deeply dedicated to his family, and was married to Evangelist Dr. Addie Davis for 64 years. He leaves behind his wife, 13 children, 41 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren, who will undoubtedly carry on his legacy of service and leadership.

Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and honor that I recognize the life of Bishop Nathaniel James Davis, Sr. His life and dedication to serving his community should be an inspiration to us all.

RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

HON. DEBBIE LESKO

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the centennial of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

On November 11, 2021, Veteran's Day, the United States will mark 100 years since the interment of an unidentifiable member of the American Expeditionary Forces of World War I at Arlington National Cemetery.

The place of interment has come to be known as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and is regarded as America's most sacred shrine. It is dedicated to all veterans that have served and made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of our great nation.

My congressional district is home to over 70,000 veterans and their families; and on this day and every day, we honor ALL who served and continue to serve our country.

HONORING FIREFIGHTER CARL BLUBAUGH

HON. JOHN JOYCE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Firefighter Carl Blubaugh for his 55 years of service with the Meyersdale Volunteer Fire Department in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

Firefighters' commitment and service to our community are invaluable. Volunteer firefighters often are called on to respond to emergencies of all types. From battling structure fires to conducting search and rescue operations, volunteer firefighters respond immediately whenever disaster strikes. These heroes often go above and beyond—they teach first aid, educate students about fire and other dangerous hazards, and even install car safety seats for children. Through their diverse and often-difficult work, volunteer firefighters pro-

vide lifesaving services and are a staple of our local community.

Firefighter Blubaugh has worked throughout his career to serve the people of Somerset County. On behalf of Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District, I thank him for his work to protect life and property in our community and wish him continued health, safety, and success.

HONORING KAREN KENINGER, DI- RECTOR OF THE NATIONAL LI- BRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PRINT DISABLED, IN CELE- BRATION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge a noteworthy occasion at the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS)—the retirement of Director Karen Keninger. Having dedicated nearly a decade of service under two Librarians of Congress, Karen's devotion to the NLS collection shows in the excellence she has brought to the program through both expansion of the collection and innovation of service.

The NLS is an institution committed to serving readers with disabilities with the mission of ensuring "that all may read". Offering free braille and talking book library services for people with temporary or permanent reading disabilities, the NLS has played an instrumental part in ensuring that the Library of Congress' collection can be enjoyed by all Americans.

As director of the NLS, over her nearly decade of leadership, Karen has doubled the collection of talking books and magazines while reducing production time for reading materials. She has opened up new worlds for all NLS patrons by ushering in the creation of mobile apps for downloading books and magazines in audio and braille, as well as advocating that the United States be a party to the Marrakesh Treaty, which provides for the exchange of accessible-format books across international borders. Her mission to ensure "that all may read" was all the more realized through her instrumental involvement in the launch of braille eReader device pilot programs to both increase the speed of getting materials to patrons and reduce storage and delivery requirements for materials for librarians.

Beyond the collection, Karen has played the lead role in the renovation of the NLS satellite office building and the adoption of a new, modernized name for NLS reflecting its service to not only blind Americans, but to the larger print disabled community. She ushered in a new era of NLS service and restructured the organization to better align with the mission of the Library to provide access for all the American people.

This year, the NLS celebrated its 90th Anniversary. It is due to dedicated servants of the American people, like Karen, that we owe our thanks for a successful and influential program that touches American lives every day.